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CONFESSIONS OF CLARENCE

By KENNARD BECKER

HOW was I to know what was to follow? Six years I had hidden in Brown Hall trying to pass Drawing 401. I was unaccustomed to the bitter disappointments and dire wickedness of the outside world in which you, you, and you live. I used to watch the birdies from the laboratory and wish that I, too, had a girl friend who would be waiting at a little nest when I returned from one of them gol' darned white collar jobs. I was in the cavernous and unsurmountable depths of despair, and then . . . I saw her!

She was a glittering blonde with eyes, oh, so big and round. She had dared to stray close by the laboratory and regarded it as a dangerous thrill, because her mother had also gone to college and knew all about engineers. I found out the name of my dream girl from a brother sufferer who had chanced to meet her on one of his yearly visits to Long's to stock up on 2-H pencils, n'stuff. And her name was Trixie.

My mother had warned me when I left for Ohio State, to be a good boy and a careful one. I thought at the time, "Dear Ma, how little you know of the real Clarence! How little you realize that underneath my none too profusely matted chest, there lies a longing for gayety, merriment, happiness, and, ah—yes, love!" Abruptly turning to her, I said, "Ma, I shall forever heed your noble words, you know that." She had answered simply, "Yowsah, m'boy."

After seeing Trixie several times from my lonely window, I remembered how as a verdant freshman I had promised myself that some day I'd step out and be a "lady-killer." I made up my mind to write home for more money, skip a few labs, shave, and endeavor to become acquainted with my li'l "Passion Flower," even if it meant changing to the Arts or Commerce College. I realized I must become "one of the boys." Months of preparation followed. I fell in with the worst crowd on the campus—gay, fast, hilarious—and a bit mad.

I bought my way into the swellest campus club and allowed by noble character to be debauched. They were rounders for the most part, but I had no objection to that. I was fascinated; I longed to have a well rounded education.

Soon I was well on my way. I became familiar with Beer, Martini's, Camels, Gin Fizzes, Beer, Whiskey Sours, More Beer. How strange things seemed every morning.

At last, my training over, I felt I was capable of competing with any man for the love of my "only one." I'll never forget my embarrassment when Trixie's eyes first met mine. I muttered to myself, stammered, and

proceeded to gradually disintegrate, until she, dear one, put me at ease when she murmured, passionately, "Hello!"

After that we got along famously. Our very hearts were in tune. On our sixth date, I had the audacity to put my arm around her. She made no attempt to remove it. Right there, I suspected that she was a wicked woman. She was striking in appearance, and had very voluptuous characteristics. She always wore her room-mates clothes well, and was unusually attractive this night. Was I to blame, when I then held her hand with equal boldness and audacity.

It was a month after I had met her that it happened. We were riding home from the Club Dance in a five and fifteen taxi. No sooner were we inside than I held her hand. I was sure of myself, but we were getting near her house sooner than I desired, so I directed the driver to take us for a spin out along the River Road.

It was the third time along here that it happened. I uttered not a word, but my mind was busy, and I suspected that she knew what I was thinking. I had a feeling that she knew all along. At any rate, as the meter was ticking out thirty cents, some devil possessed me with this intoxicating idea. There I sat—young, hungry for love—and weak. I responded. I put my brawny arm about her lovely neck. For the first time I was holding her hand and placing my arm around her at the same time. The awful realization of this stunned me and made my asthma worse.

Without once thinking, without once stopping to consider anything, my years of training, my mother's advice, my morals—to say nothing of the girl in my arms—I kissed her!

The magical ecstasy of that first osculation! Bewildered with passion I did not stop at one kiss. There were three that wonderful first night, and even after that I suppose I kissed her on an average of two times a week.

Almost immediately, I began to pay the piper. Ma had warned me of the ways of these college coeds, but I had listened with unhearing ears. No later than the very next day as I sat gazing at the chemical professor, trying to concentrate on my studies, I was distracted by thoughts of Trixie, and with each one, I thought of kissing her in the taxi, and I blushed and blushed inwardly. But I was only beginning to suffer. I was sitting there silently when she came gliding into the room, late to class. She skipped right up to me without any hesitation, without the slightest regard for me and the two hundred students in the room, all of whom stared at us as if they knew our terrible secret.

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Again she uttered that horrible word that had first set my blood to boiling, my ears to ringing, and blinded me to life itself. "Hello!" she said.

The torture of my embarrassment! The very lips that I had kissed saying hello to me like that before two hundred people. It was unspeakable. Life was unbearable, so I took the easiest way of escape from it all. I threw myself into Mirror Lake, and was never heard of again.